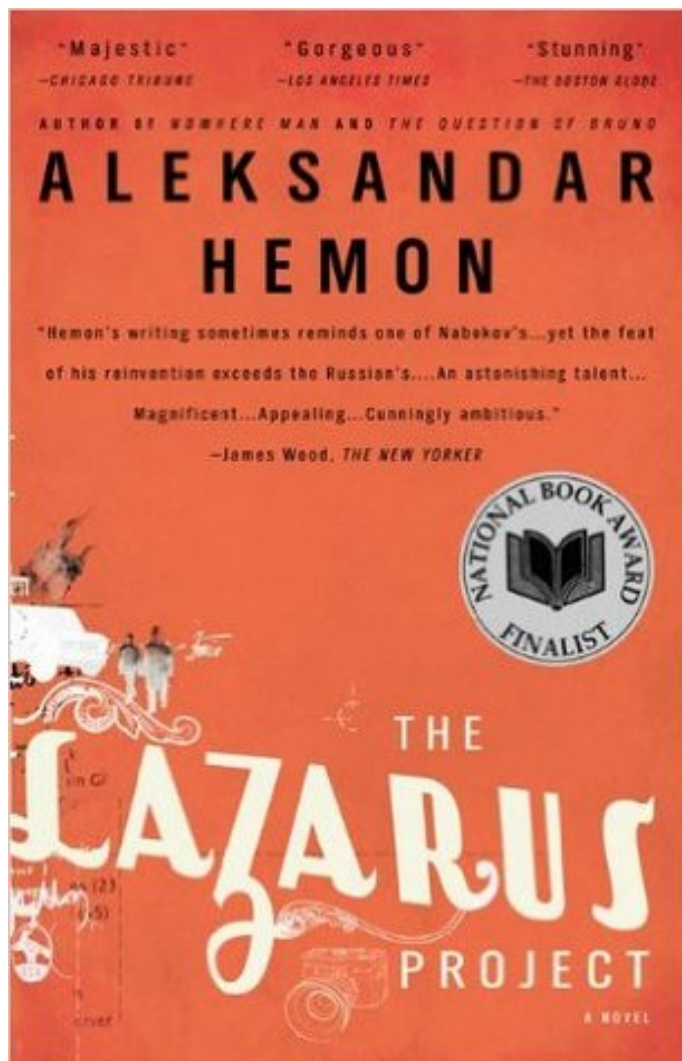


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**Aleksandar Hemon**

**The Lazarus Project**



Title: The Lazarus Project

Author: Aleksandar Hemon

Format: Hardcover

Language: English

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## Description

On March 2, 1908, nineteen-year-old Lazarus Averbuch, an Eastern European Jewish immigrant, was shot to death on the doorstep of the Chicago chief of police and cast as a would-be anarchist assassin.

A century later, a young Eastern European writer in Chicago named Brik becomes obsessed with Lazarus's story. Brik enlists his friend Rora -- a war photographer from Sarajevo -- to join him in retracing Averbuch's path.

Through a history of pogroms and poverty, and a prism of a present-day landscape of cheap mafiosi and even cheaper prostitutes, the stories of Averbuch and Brik become inextricably intertwined, creating a truly original, provocative, and entertaining novel that confirms Aleksandar Hemon as one of the most dynamic and essential literary voices of our time.

## Insightful reviews

Melora: Not since *The Life of Pi* have I been so underwhelmed by a book that got great reviews, and that at least one friend of mine loved. Unfortunately, since my friend also picked this for book club, I had to stick with it. Otherwise, I would have called it quits in the first few pages.

Why did I dislike this book? Well, for starters, the author jumped around between narratives, so therefore from one century to another, and the transitions were jarring. Also, I have to admit, I never really found that I cared about any of the characters. They seemed navel-pondering and one-dimensional, like sketches rather than fleshed-out characters. The narrator himself was a pretentious, selfish bore, and that never helps a story. Also, I felt that the story-within-a-story was merely a gimmick and served no real purpose. Both stories, past and present, seemed rather pointless and uninspiring, ending abruptly and unsatisfyingly.

On the plus side, this wasn't as long as *The Life of Pi*, or some of the other critically acclaimed snoozes I've had in the past couple of years (*Poisonwood Bible*, anyone?). I just wish the author had concentrated all of his efforts on one story or the other, rather than flitting back and forth in what seemed an effort to flaunt his literary bag of tricks.

(I was feeling quite hateful when I finished this book, and while I do wish half stars were available, I have amended my review to 2, rather than 1, stars.)

Joe: I still need to think about this book, but I will say book designers in general need to stop putting critics' blurbs on the cover.... I really don't see much of a continuum between Hemon and Nabokov (except that they're both Slavs writing in English) And I also don't know why this pretentious boner from the *New Yorker* calls Nabokov "the Russian," but it took me a while to cut away the crap impressions glued all over the covers, the first 8 pages, etc.

The themes of malleable truth, the power of fiction and storytelling to cloak reality (but maybe not alter it), the tramp's sarcasm of Brik and Rora, all these things reminded me of writers like

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Yevgeny Popov, Bohumil Hrabal, and (especially Rora's character) Jaroslav Hasek.

Once I got into it, I started really enjoying it, but I need to mull it a bit more....

Benjamin: The Lazarus Project follows two storylines, one about a late 19th century Jewish-Ukrainian immigrant to Chicago who is murdered by the Chicago Chief of Police, and the other following a writer researching a novel-to-be about that immigrant by traveling through Southeastern Europe. The latter drags a little at times as the narrator gets bogged down in Ukrainian Jewish Cultural Centers and the like, but the story of Lazarus, the immigrant is good enough to pull the reader through.

Hemon's style is what drives the book really. He learned English as a second language and, while he is obviously fluent now (this is no broken English), there is definitely a different feel to his prose. It's simple, but not simplistic, and maybe put together with a little more appreciation of the words themselves (then again, that sounds like newspaper book review bullshit).

The book reads as a weird side-by-side mix of true crime and Eastern European wanderings and all I could picture was Elijah Wood wearing huge glasses in the Ukraine. The synthesis of the two doesn't quite come off: the true crime bits about the murdered immigrant are fascinating and well seen, but the other parts are not so vividly told and tend to meander too much for my liking about the narrator's philosophical interpretation of his bad relationship with his father-in-law. This is essentially a mediocre story chopped up with a great one. The results are what you might expect.

Leanna: In 1908, Lazarus Averbuch, an immigrant from Japanese Europe, is shot lifeless by means of the Chicago leader of Police. Nearly a century later, fictional Vladimir Brik, an immigrant from Bosnia, comes to a decision to write down a e-book approximately Lazarus. Aleksandar Hemon's newest novel, *The Lazarus Project*, imagines Averbuch's existence and Brik's research. Armed with a supply and a fellow-Bosnian photographer, Brik returns to Japanese Europe to profit extra Lazarus's existence there. They commute via Ukraine, Moldova, and Bulgaria ahead of ultimately returning to Sarajevo. The chapters trade among Brik and Averbuch, and every is followed with a black-and-white photograph. Lazarus's homicide is shocking. In essence, the radical indicates he's killed as the leader acknowledges him not just as an immigrant yet a Jew whom he suspects of anarchy. Those activities seem outrageous to the modern reader. Yet, how various is early twentieth-century Chicago from early twenty-first century America? Don't many American citizens nonetheless worry immigrants? Don't many American citizens nonetheless worry anarchists—though we now name them terrorists? The truth of this comparability is disturbing. The novel additionally increases the fascinating query of what makes an American an American. Whereas touring in Japanese Europe, Brik usually refers to himself as American instead of Bosnian. Sooner or later does he really morph from one nationality—one culture—to another? Does an immigrant ever really think American? Lazarus invitations contemplation and introspection. At times, though, I used to be distracted from the radical via Hemon himself. What little I do know concerning the author's biography is unusually

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just like his character. Hemon, like Brik, was once traveling the United States whilst the clash in Bosnia broke out. Hemon, like Brik, is married to an American. Hemon, like Brik, acquired a friend to write down his book. Hemon and photographer Velibor Bozovic traveled via Japanese Europe learning Averbuch's story. Brik doesn't continuously have the main flattering view of his wife, his in-laws, marriage, and fatherhood. I continuously imagined how Hemon's spouse felt studying those passages. Hemon isn't a local English speaker. He makes a few attention-grabbing vocabulary offerings and turns out overly-obsessed with Madonna, yet mostly Lazarus is fantastically written. I'll certainly be studying extra Hemon.

Nick: Hemon is that rarest of all writers, rarer nonetheless for being an immigrant, whose prose has power with no wasting purpose, who can construct an intricate, time- and story-shifting plot with no making it look like pointless fireworks. And but his prose keeps a style of his East European mordancy, the wit of somebody born in a rustic that now not exists. The important personality is Vladimir Brik, an immigrant like Hemon from Sarajevo who's eager about the true tale of Lazarus Averbukh, a nineteen 12 months outdated who fled to the USA from a pogrom in a space now positioned in a space that may be a backwater even for Moldova. In 1908, Averbukh went to the home of the Chicago leader of Police to offer him a letter. The executive of Police killed Averbukh; Hemon re-creates the hysteria of the times, the efforts of the police and the click to color Averbukh as an anarchist assassin, the efforts of Lazarus' sister to reclaim his continues to be and a few type of lifestyles for herself (she ultimately lower back to Europe, the place it truly is idea she perished lower than Nazism). This is often interwoven, from time to time in sequential passages, with Brik's picaresque and eventually fruitless attempt to discover strains of Averbukh's European past. Fortunately, Hemon presents Brik with either a voice that's irreverent and questioning. In addition to the joke- and story-telling better half of his youth, Rora (the form of child who led travelers to medieval mosques that have been outfitted the century before, warned them to depart their footwear open air the construction to honor neighborhood customs, after which made off with the footwear). The assumption of knitting jointly Rora's jokes and tales of the Bosnian-Serb war, Olga's struggles to do correct by way of her more youthful brother (despite the sinister police, the blowhard newspaperman, and her fellow immigrants), and Brik's meditations on his Sarajevo prior and adjusting to his American spouse and her family, sounds like it can topple less than its personal weight. However it works, somehow, as a unity, and what emerges is a deeply-felt and argued dialogue of what it could possibly suggest to inform stories. The single author who I have ever learn who could make the same entire out of what turns out chaotic alongside the best way is Roberto Banuelos within the "Savage Detectives."

Stefan: With "The Lazarus Project," Aleksander Hemon establishes himself as a totally ignorable voice at the literary scene; a fabricated from hype over substance; a lazy author coasting at the unimaginable success of successful a MacArthur grant, often referred to as a "genius grant." Hemon could be a genius, yet he is certainly a nasty writer. The tale definitely has possibilities. It at the same time tells the tale of a Jewish immigrant (Lazarus) murdered by way of a police leader in 1908 Chicago, and accordingly made out to be an anarchist who was once making plans to assassinate the chief, and a Bosnian-born author (Brik) dwelling in Chicago who units out to write down a booklet approximately it. Hemon occurs to be a Bosnian-born author dwelling in Chicago. And the book's narrator, Brik, occurs to have gained a supply that permits him to adopt the Lazarus project. It truly is evidently thinly veiled autobiography (my

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wager is Hemon obtained uninterested in doing examine at the genuine occasions surrounding Lazarus' homicide and made up our minds to put in writing a unique a few author gaining knowledge of Lazarus' murder). yet what rather undercuts the publication is that Hemon does not even trouble to flesh out the nature that is sincerely according to himself. there is not any indication of why Brik is attracted to Lazarus' story. He even mentions that the book, as soon as written, may have no genuine effect at the world. So why is he bothering? Brik however runs right into a youth buddy from Sarajevo, Rora, and the 2 pass on a visit to jap Europe to analyze Lazarus' origins, coming to the United States after soreness a pogrom (an anti-Jewish riot) in Kishinev, then a part of the Russian Empire. Brik and Rora's journey is extra a glance at how a author and his photographer good friend waste supply funds than it's an perception into early twentieth Century Russia. There are imprecise connections made among Brik and Lazarus, yet they volume to nothing. Rora, a veteran of the battle in Sarajevo in the course of the mid-90s, tells tales of his experiences. And Brik offers together with his dislocation as an immigrant, leaving his domestic state earlier than the struggle and marrying an American girl who could by no means actually comprehend him and vice-versa. All of this is often littered haphazardly in the course of the novel. by no means brain context, history or perhaps a few type of point of interest for the narrative. the place is that this all going? who're those people? we do not locate out. Brik is any such indifferent narrator (he witnesses and partakes in a few surprising acts of violence, after which strikes on as though they're nothing), we will not even infer a lot either. We simply need to imagine what this novel is about. the hot York instances booklet evaluate (<http://nyti.ms/bqK7kQ>), which in fact heaped nice compliment on "The Lazarus Project," attempted to make the relationship among Lazarus being railroaded as an anarchist and post-9/11 America. Weak! that is as lazy and half-baked as an analogy because the ebook itself. The Sept. 11 assaults or aftermath are by no means even pointed out within the novel and there is not anything concerning the narrator that will recommend he is drawn to making such grand connections. Again, it is not in any respect transparent why he cares approximately this Lazarus project. there is not anything within the textual content to signify why it truly is significant to him or somebody else, although it definitely can have been. I say the subsequent to not be dramatic and without malice intended, yet Hemon is a valueless hack and this publication do not have been published. i did not hate it. there have been flashes of there being anything there, yet no longer enough. no longer sufficient to be published. basic as that. If i used to be an editor or a chum or a member of an artistic writing type interpreting this, i might say, you may have a few good things right here yet you must flesh it out more. you must upload context and improve the characters. you will have loads of paintings to do. At one point, overdue within the novel, Brik writes that Bosnia is home, "where my middle is." house is the place the guts is? that is what will get you a MacArthur provide those days? Blatant, sappy, meaningless cliché? This book, like so much those days, sincerely wasn't edited via an editor. You wonder whether the author himself even gave it a re-evaluation after an preliminary draft. Or did he simply relaxation on his laurels and look ahead to the sycophants on the ny instances and the nationwide booklet Awards to coronate him?

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